

SENATOR BRASHEAR: I set myself up for that one.

SPEAKER WITHEM: I do not know. I think Vicki is counting the number of people excused. There are 19 excused at this point.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I...courage, I'm advised. I will be brief, I think we've had an explanation of the bill and a good discussion. I really would like to stress that the bill is not looking at our past. The bill is an effort to learn from our past and to look to our future. We have seen a number...a growing number of instances on both sides of the aisle and I have said to many or most or all of you that I wanted this to be very nonpartisan. I hope I have been faithful to that pledge. We have seen people of all political persuasions loaning more and more money to their campaign committees and repaying themselves. Now we have, of late, developed the new additional concept of paying interest. With the law, as written, permitting not only the loans of unlimited amount but the payment of interest to the highest lawful rate, it seems to me that the time has come for the body to say, on behalf of the people, that we will put in place some appropriate level of protection for the public interest. That's the point of this bill. I want to express my gratitude to my colleague, Senator Brown, for prioritizing it, to the Government Committee for reporting it out and amending it into its present form, and to the 41 cosponsors who were kind enough to enroll with me. I ask your support for the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President and members, LB 399 is a small move but it's very important, and that's why I designated it my priority bill. I want to thank Senator Brashear for caring about campaign finance reform and developing and introducing this bill. What I would like to talk about is what LB 399 is not. It is not partisan, that's why Senator Brashear and I have worked on this together. It's a sword that cuts both ways. Senator Brashear and I would probably choose different examples of the things that have caused us to be concerned about this. But the second thing that it is not, it is not retroactive. It is not aimed at anyone who may legally have used loans and made interest in campaign financing. It is not directed at any particular individual and it is not to preclude someone from buying an election. They just must do it the old-fashioned way